To Greg

IN THE NEWS

Greens Protest McDonald's In Riga

The Latvian Environment Protection Club staged a rally December 15 in Riga to protest the opening of the first McDonald's restaurant in the Baltics. The Latvian Greens protested against McDonald's Big Macs and french fries, which are now sold in the place of a former bookstore in the center of Riga opposite the Freedom Monument. The plastic plates and dishes used by McDonald's, as well as imported food products, was also a reason for the wrath of the "Greens." The slogan reads: "McDonald's- in each bookstore!"

Photo by Aigars Jansons /A.F.I./

Vilnius' Old Town Included In World Heritage List

UNESCO added the historical center of the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius, to its World Heritage list December 16, along with 28 other cultural and natural wonders.

UNESCO protection means that the Old Town of Vilnius is considered a site of exceptional universal value. The status creates new opportunities in the search for financial means for the city's preservation and restoration. The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization will also provide expert consultations, lab equipment, and other assistance.

The historical part of the Lithuanian capital, the official founding date of which is 1323, covers an area of 359 hectares with 10 squares, 20 churches and a population of around 30,700.

The Old Town of Vilnius is the first site in the Baltic nations to be included in the World Heritage list, which was first made up in 1972.

The latest additions, taking to 440 the number of sites listed as of exceptional universal value, included the Potala pPalace in the Tibetan capital Lhasa, the Italian town of Vicenza, and the line drawings of Peru's Nazca Valley – mysterious large figures that can only be seen from the air.

Other cultural sites designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization included the monasteries on the slopes of Mexican volcano Popocatepetl, the old quarters and fortifications of the city of Luxembourg, Denmark's Jelling burial mounds, and Georgia's Mtskheta churches, Bagrati Cathedral, and Gelati monastery.

The new natural sites included Uganda's Ruwenzori and Bwindi national parks, the Donana Bird Sanctuary in Spain's Andalusia, and Vietnam's dramatic Ha Long Bay with its 1600 islands.

Venezuela's Canaima National Park which inspired Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's *Lost World* and boasts a 1000 meter (3300 foot) waterfall – the world's highest – was also included. *(Reuter-BNS)*

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One hour of news, entertainment and music
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Greetings of the Season!

HOLIDAY HOURS

BAR
24 11:30-17:00
25 11:30-17:00
26 11:30-24:00
27 11:30-24:00
28 11:30-24:00
29 11:30-24:00
30 11:30-24:00
31 11:30-17:00
01 11:30-17:00
02 11:30-03:00

RESTAURANT
24 Closed
25 Christmas dinner (reserved)
26 Closed
27 Closed
29 Closed
30 Closed
31 Closed
01 Closed
02 18:00-24:00
03 18:00-24:00
04 18:00-24:00
05 18:00-24:00
06 18:00-24:00
07 18:00-24:00
08 18:00-24:00
09 18:00-24:00

TOWER

You'll find TOWER next to the famous Powder Tower
Smilšu St. 7, in Riga's Old Town

Baltic Briefs

100 murders in Tallinn in 1994

About one hundred people have been murdered in the Estonian capital in 1994. This comprises 30.2 percent of all murders committed in Estonia in the first eleven months of this year.

According to police officials, more than half of the murders occur in quarrels during drinking bouts. Murders are also committed in the power struggle among criminal gangs, and murders by hit men.

The crime rate in Tallinn has not dropped significantly compared to the previous year. Annually, 290 crimes per every 10,000 Tallinners are committed.

The number of robberies, car thefts, and cases of extortion have increased. More than half of the cars stolen in Estonia come from Tallinn, and every third case of extortion takes place in the capital. At the same time, Tallinn's rate of solved crimes is the lowest in Estonia.

The low rate of solved crimes is mostly blamed on the shortage of investigators. The Tallinn police currently employ 106 investigators, only 12 of whom have adequate command of the Estonian language.

Finland to support Paldiski cleanup

The Finnish government promised Estonia an aid package of 1.3 million kroons next year to cleanup the former Russian naval base of Paldiski. Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho announced the decision at a meeting with his Estonian counterpart, Andres Tarand, in Helsinki December 16.

The money will go to the Finnish company Imatran Voimat International, which must recycle all liquid waste the Russian army left behind in Paldiski.

The Finnish government also promised 500,000 to 750,000 kroons to improve the teaching of the Estonian language in the northeastern, mainly Russian-populated city of Narva.

Brazauskas doubts he'll return to LDDP

Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas, former leader of the Communist Party and the ruling Democratic Labor Party, is undecided about whether he will return to the party after his term in office expires.

"It'll depend on many things – how the party's going to develop...who its members are," the president said in an interview to the Lithuanian daily *Diena*.

Brazauskas suspended his membership in the Democratic Labor Party after he was elected president in 1993.

Visa-free travel not welcome

Sweden and Finland have thwarted Estonia's hopes for a visa-free regimen due to Estonia's rampant crime rate and problems with border security, Swedish Foreign Minister Lena Hjelm-Wallen told her Estonian counterpart Jüri Luik December 16. During his meeting with Estonian Prime Minister Andres Tarand, Finnish Premier Esko Aho gave the same reason. Tarand believes the visa requirement may be lifted in 1995 or 1996.

Lithuanian, Russian PMs to meet

Lithuanian Prime Minister Adolfas Šleževičius and his Russian counterpart Viktor Chernomyrdin agreed during a telephone conversation last week to meet in Moscow in mid-January. Moscow has stated on a number of occasions that the granting of the most favored nation status to Lithuania is linked to the problem of Russian military transit through Lithuania and access to the Kaliningrad region.

Estonian driver killed in Lithuania

An Estonian truck driver was beaten to death by unidentified assailants the night of December 14 in the southern Lithuanian town of Marijampole.

He was assaulted at a parking lot on the grounds of a factory where he had intended to spend the night. It was established after a preliminary investigation that the driver is Rein Kurvet, 53, from Estonia.

CSCE mission to stay in Estonia

The Estonian government agreed to extend until July 1995 the stay of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe mission in Estonia, Estonian Prime Minister Andres Tarand announced during his visit to Finland last week.

According to Tarand and his Finnish counterpart Esko Aho, "the CSCE mission to Estonia has been a stabilizing factor, but after June 1995 its presence in Estonia will no longer be expedient."

The mission's purpose is to monitor the human rights situation in the Baltic nation.

Baltic News Service